United Nations ST/AI/1999/8

Secretariat

17 August 1999

Administrative instruction

Placement and promotion system*

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1997/1, hereby promulgates the following rules to govern placement and promotion of staff:

Section 1

Scope

1.1 The present instruction shall apply to placement and promotion to posts in the Professional category and at the D-1 level of staff already in service who have been appointed under staff rule 104.14 or 104.15. The instruction shall also apply to the placement and promotion to posts in the General Service and related categories, at levels determined in accordance with local conditions, of staff already in service who have been appointed under the 100 series of the Staff Rules in accordance with established procedures. At New York Headquarters, the present instruction shall apply to posts in the General Service and related categories at the G-5, S-3 and TC-4 levels and above.

1.2 Mission posts and posts in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General shall be excluded from the scope of the present instruction. Additionally, the special procedures governing promotion to P-3 of interpreters, translators, precis-writers, editors, verbatim reporters and proof-readers shall continue to apply.

1.3 Placement and promotion of staff appointed to organizational entities that have a special status in matters of appointment shall use the provisions of the present instruction as guidelines, with appropriate adjustments due to such special status and the existence of specific advisory bodies on placement and promotion matters, in order to ensure uniformity of approach throughout the Secretariat.

1.4 The provisions of the present instruction shall be read in conjunction with the special measures for the achievement of gender equality set out in administrative instruction ST/AI/412 or in any subsequent instruction on the same subject.

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1.5 The provisions of the present instruction shall also be read in conjunction with administrative instruction ST/AI/1997/7, entitled "Recruitment procedures for Professional staff", as amended by ST/AI/1998/5.

Section 2

Placement within a department or office

2.1 Vacant posts shall normally remain unencumbered until filled through established recruitment procedures or the procedures set out in the present instruction. Heads of departments and offices retain the authority to transfer staff members within their departments or offices to vacant posts at the same level.

2.2 Assignment to the functions of an unencumbered vacant post at a higher level may be made on an exceptional and temporary basis only. Every effort shall be made to limit such temporary assignment to the shortest possible period, during which the normal procedures for recruitment or placement and promotion shall be followed.

2.3 When the incumbent of a post goes on mission detail, secondment, special leave without pay, temporary loan or assignment, the head of the department or office shall determine whether the temporary need may be met within the department or office by a staff member at the same level or one level below and, if so, shall place that staff member temporarily against the encumbered post.

2.4 When temporary placement under sections 2.2 and 2.3 above is expected to be for three months or longer, the department or office concerned shall inform its staff of the temporary vacancy and give them the opportunity to notify the executive or local personnel office of their interest in being considered prior to selection.

Section 3

Vacancy announcements

3.1 It is the responsibility of heads of departments and offices to inform the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office of all vacancies foreseen to occur within six months in regular budget posts or in extrabudgetary posts authorized for one year or longer and of all other vacancies in such posts as soon as they occur. When a staff member has been laterally transferred within a department, the vacancy to be circulated shall be for the post that is no longer encumbered after such a transfer.

3.2 The vacancy announcement shall reflect the classified functions of the post. Confirmation of the classified level of the post prior to issuance of a vacancy announcement shall not be required unless the department or office concerned has determined that there has been a significant change in the functions of the post. When such a change has occurred, a classification review by the appropriate official shall be required prior to the issuance of a vacancy announcement.

3.3 A vacancy announcement shall be issued for all vacant posts at the P-3 level and above and for all vacant posts in the General Service and related categories within the scope of the present instruction, as defined in section 1.1 above.

3.4 A vacancy announcement shall also be issued when an encumbered post is reclassified upwards. However, when such a post has been reclassified upward by one level in the General Service and related categories, or in the Professional category and above, no

vacancy announcement shall be required when the incumbent had performed the functions for at least three years prior to the effective date of the upgrading. In such cases, a recommendation for promotion shall be made by the head of office to the appropriate appointment and promotion body.

3.5 A vacancy announcement may be issued for posts at the P-2 level to facilitate movement of staff from one department or office to another.

3.6 Vacancy announcements shall be issued as follows:

(a) Vacant posts at the P-2 level shall be circulated internally only;

(b) In accordance with section 4.2 of ST/AI/1997/7, vacant posts at the P-3 level shall be circulated internally first; if no suitable internal candidate is identified, candidates successful in a competitive recruitment examination at the P-3 level in the relevant occupational group shall be reviewed and selected as appropriate. An external vacancy announcement shall be circulated only when there is no suitably qualified candidate among those having successfully passed a P-3 examination;

(c) Vacant posts at the P-4 level shall normally be circulated internally first, taking into account the potential availability of qualified internal candidates and the need to improve geographical and gender balance;

(d) Vacant posts at the P-5 level and above shall be circulated internally and externally, except for language posts to be filled by staff previously recruited through a competitive examination, which shall, in the first instance, be circulated internally only;

(e) Vacant posts in the General Service and related categories shall be circulated at the duty station where the posts are located only. They shall be circulated internally only, unless it is established that there is no qualified internal candidate available.

3.7 The Office of Human Resources Management shall publish a monthly list of all vacancy announcements, except for posts subject to local recruitment at offices away from Headquarters, which shall be published by the local personnel office.

Section 4

Eligibility to apply

4.1 Staff members fulfilling the conditions defined in section 1.1 of the present instruction may apply for vacancies at their current level or one level higher under the provisions of the present instruction, provided they meet the applicable seniority requirements.

4.2 Language staff recruited in the Professional category outside the system of desirable ranges may apply for a post subject to that system after having served five years against one or more language posts.

4.3 Staff members promoted from the General Service and related categories to the Professional category shall be required to serve for two years in the post to which they were promoted before they become eligible to apply for another post.

Section 5

Applications

5.1 Applicants shall comply with all instructions for submission of applications contained in the vacancy announcement. Applications received after the deadline indicated in the vacancy announcement shall not be accepted unless the staff member establishes that compelling circumstances prevented submission of the application by the deadline. Such applications, however, may be considered only if received no later than two weeks after the deadline, so as not to delay completion of the evaluation of all the applicants by the department or office concerned.

5.2 Staff members shall provide in their applications all relevant information, including a copy of the last two performance reports or appraisals, as appropriate. When there is a gap of six months or longer in the record of performance or when an appraisal has not been completed within six months of the end of the preceding performance appraisal system (PAS) cycle, the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office shall so inform the relevant executive or administrative office, which shall request the supervisor to complete the missing performance evaluation report or appraisal within one month. If this is not done, the applicant shall be deemed to have fully met performance expectations during the period for which there is no performance report or appraisal.

5.3 Receipt of every application shall be acknowledged no later than 10 working days after the deadline for receipt of applications.

5.4 Applications of all eligible candidates shall be submitted to the head of department or office concerned for evaluation and review as provided in section 7 below. Should an applicant wish to submit new information relevant to the assessment of his or her qualifications for the post, such as obtainment of a new degree or a letter of commendation, the applicant should immediately communicate such information to the department or office concerned, with a copy to the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office.

5.5 No staff member shall be recommended for promotion unless a post at the higher level is available.

Section 6

Criteria for placement and promotion

Pursuant to Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and staff regulation 4.2, the following criteria shall apply when considering the applicants for a vacant post at each level of evaluation and review:

(a) Past performance, competence, efficiency and demonstrated potential to perform at the level of the vacant post;

(b) Integrity;

(c) Relevant experience and seniority;

(d) Relevant academic training and professional qualifications and achievements;

(e) Supervisory and leadership abilities, if applicable;

(f) Record of mobility and service in hardship duty stations, where appropriate;

(g) Linguistic proficiency for posts in the Professional category and above and when required for posts in the General Service and related categories.

Section 7

Departmental evaluation and review

7.1 After reviewing and evaluating the applicants, the official who will supervise performance of the functions shall make a preliminary recommendation of the applicants who meet the requirements of the post, in ranking order.

7.2 The head of department or office shall request the advice of a departmental panel on the filling of the vacant post. The panel shall comprise:

(a) One or more officials representing the head of department or office;

(b) An equitable number of representatives designated by the staff of the department or office, at an appropriate category and level, depending on the post to be filled. In small duty stations or in duty stations comprising only one department or office, staff members elected to the staff representative body may serve in that capacity.

7.3 The departmental panel shall invite to participate, in an ex officio capacity, at every meeting:

(a) A representative of the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office to advise on applicable rules and procedures;

(b) The departmental focal point for women to advise on the application of the special measures for the achievement of gender equality.

When an ex officio member of the panel is of the view that the applicable rules and procedures or the special measures for the achievement of gender equality have not been properly applied, that view shall be fully reflected in the report of the departmental panel.

7.4 The departmental panel shall review the applicants on the basis of the criteria set out in section 6 of the present instruction and submit to the head of department or office a short list of the applicants who meet the requirements of the post, in ranking order.

7.5 The head of department or office shall consider the preliminary recommendation and the advice received from the departmental panel and decide on his or her recommendation of the applicants, in ranking order, for submission to the appropriate appointment and promotion body.

7.6 When the post to be filled involves significant functions in financial management, personnel management and general services administration, the executive or local personnel office shall inform the Office of Human Resources Management of the short-listed candidates so that the approvals required under Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/213/Rev.1 may be obtained prior to submission to the appropriate appointment and promotion body.

7.7 Notwithstanding the above, at those duty stations where the Appointment and Promotion Panel or Committee considers the cases of a single office or regional commission, the advice of a departmental panel shall not be required for placement and promotion to posts up to and including the P-4 level if the head of the office and the representatives of the staff at a particular duty station agree that cases are to be submitted directly to the relevant joint appointment and promotion body at that duty station.

Section 8

Consideration by the appointment and promotion bodies

8.1 The recommendation of the head of department/office shall be submitted to the appropriate appointment and promotion body, as determined under staff rule 104.14.

8.2 The submission to the appointment and promotion body shall include all relevant information, in particular:

(a) A copy of the departmental panel report, except at those duty stations where it has been decided that cases should be submitted directly to the Appointment and Promotion Committee or Panel;

(b) Tables showing the current vacancies at the level of the post, the posts at that level that are to become vacant within the next six months and the posts encumbered at a lower level.

8.3 A copy of the submission shall be sent to the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office, as appropriate.

8.4 The appointment and promotion body shall review the eligible candidates and may invite the department or office to make an oral presentation. The Appointment and Promotion Board may invite the Office of Human Resources Management to make a presentation for posts located at offices away from Headquarters.

8.5 When the Appointment and Promotion Board or Panel proposes to recommend candidates other than those recommended by the department or office, or to recommend them in a different order of ranking, the head of the department or office shall be so advised and shall be invited to submit his or her comments to the Board or Panel.

8.6 The recommendation of the appointment and promotion body shall be submitted to the appropriate official for decision on behalf of the Secretary-General. However, pursuant to staff rule 104.14 (h), when an Appointment and Promotion Committee has not unanimously endorsed the recommendation made by the head of department/office, the case shall be referred to the Appointment and Promotion Board for final advice.

Section 9

Decision and implementation

9.1 The official having delegated authority to decide on the placement and promotion for the post concerned shall do so in the light of the advice received from the appointment and promotion body and all other relevant material, including the comments made by the head of the department or office under section 8.5 of the present instruction.

9.2 The selected candidate and the departments or offices concerned shall be promptly notified of the decision. Other staff shall be informed through information circulars issued for that purpose by the Office of Human Resources Management or the local personnel office.

9.3 The decision to select a particular candidate shall be implemented upon its communication in writing to the staff member concerned. However, when a vacancy announcement is issued under section 3.4 of the present instruction for an encumbered post which has been reclassified upward, and an applicant other than the incumbent is selected,

the decision shall be implemented only when a suitable post has been identified for the incumbent.

9.4 When the selection also entails promotion to a higher level, the earliest date on which such promotion may become effective shall be the first day of the month following the decision, subject to the availability of the post and the assumption of the higher-level functions.

9.5 When the decision entails movement from one department or office to another, the releasing department or office shall release the staff member as soon as possible and no later than two months after the date of notification of the decision.

9.6 Should the selected candidate decline or fail to take up the functions for which he or she has been selected within two months, or vacate the post for any reason within six months of the Secretary-General's decision, one of the other candidates on the short list may be selected by the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the head of department or office.

Section 10

Final provisions

10.1 The present administrative instruction shall enter into force on 1 September 1999.

10.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/413 is hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Joseph E. **Connor**
Under-Secretary-General
for Management